The Church School Teacher

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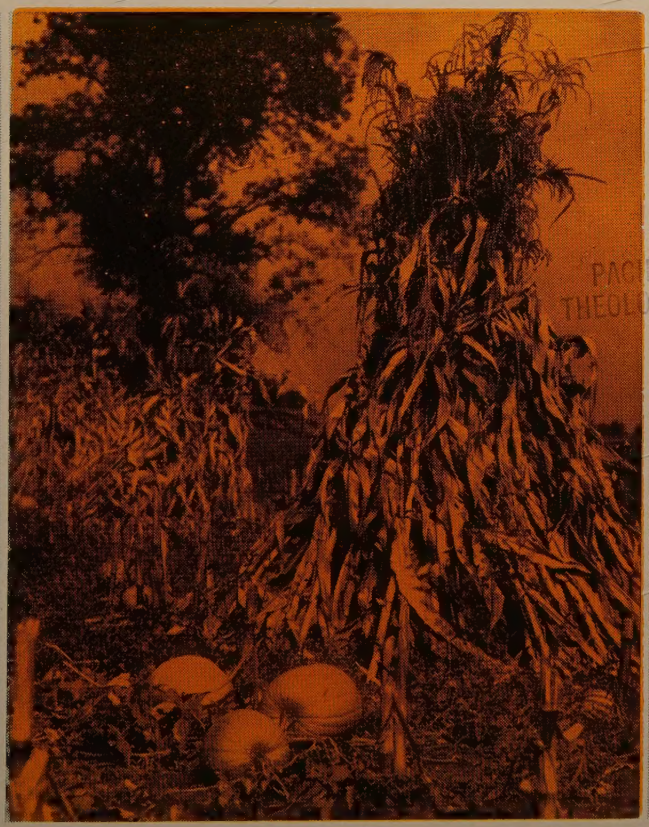

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MAGAZINE FOR CHURCH SCHOOL WORKERS

THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER

VOLUME XVIII No. 9

NOVEMBER 1949

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The Church School Teacher

VOL. XVIII NOVEMBER 1949 No. 9

From Your Director

L. H. WESTBERG
Augustana Lutheran Church

In This Issue

THE November issue is a looking-ahead-to-Christmas issue. There are some mighty good things in it, we think. We hope you will read and enjoy every article.

Not About Christmas

This summer I talked about teaching methods with a professor of economics at the University of Southern California. He said that he had discarded the straight *lecture* method and was now using a combination *lecture* and *discussion* technique. "Hallelujah," I thought. "Happy are the learners in his classes. Would that my professors had done likewise."

My professors mostly droned on, priding themselves on their emulation of the European method.*

My professors were not purists in this European system, however. They usually lectured on the subject matter of the course. In fact, some of them were so faithful to the subject matter that they read their lectures right out of the text. This American variation was no improvement. It merely took the edge off any curiosity the student might have had when he entered the course.

No Discussion

Now, some of my professors did use what they thought was the discussion method. At the close of the fifty-minute lecture or at some mid-point in their dronings they looked up from their notes, glared at the students and said: "Any questions? Any comments?" No answer. Everybody either daydreaming, writing letters, or playing *cat and rat*. "What a teacher I am," thought the professor. "I am so thorough there is not a question I have not answered."

Occasionally some alert student did ask a question or make a com-

ment. This was a great strain on the class, as anyone awakened this morning by an alarm clock can understand. But the shock was soon over and everyone quickly settled back. For the professor either handled the interruption by a simple grunt or by a dissertation taking the remainder of the class period.

My professors meant well, no doubt, but most of them were a definite obstacle to the learning process. Of course, there were exceptions. To them I owe everything.

Eureka!

In Bowling Green, Ohio, there is a psychologist who has made a significant discovery. He has found out scientifically that college students (not Sunday-school pupils!) learn better without the benefit of professors' lectures. Where the professor was eliminated and the students studied together, discussed the subject matter, and together worked out common projects, they all learned better. The psychologist proved this by actual tests.

All this lengthy introduction is for the purpose of proving the validity of the following suggestion:

Superintendents, teachers, pastors! If you want to increase the effectiveness of your teaching you need not wait for an expert to lecture you. You can do better by starting right now to:

1. Have a teachers' conference at least once a month. Break it down immediately following the opening devotions or Bible study. Let each department study together the next three or four *Christian Growth Series* lessons. Spend the entire evening at it.

2. Use both Teacher's Guide and Pupil's Study Book. Use the supplementary resource books suggested in the Teacher's Guide. This will give you ample material with which to work.

3. Pray, study, discuss, let your imagination run. Work out lesson plans together. If there are pupil activities to be prepared, prepare them together. Follow through on this. If, for example, a notebook cover is to be made for the children, make it at your teachers' conference.

4. As your meetings progress, bring in local public school educators, your pastor, and other experts to join your discussion group for an evening. Keep the discussion pattern, however. Let the experts add their contributions in this informal atmosphere.

5. Delegate the business of the church school to your executive

committee. Let the officers decide how many chocolates are to go into the Christmas boxes. If you must have the formal approval of the entire staff, hold the business session at the close of the conference, not at the beginning. Otherwise you will get no farther than the chocolates.

6. If you hold extra meetings where experts can lecture or hold discussions on the Augustana Teacher Training Course, fine. By all means do this. (See Dr. Getz' article in this issue.) But let nothing be a substitute for your monthly study conference.

**As far as I can determine, the European method is a sink or swim system in which the instructor shows up at certain prescribed hours, and lectures about some book he is writing. The student works independently on some subject he must master to pass a required examination. Occasionally, so we are told, the professor touches upon the subject which the student is studying. This is only by accident, however, and is not to be depended upon.*

Direct From Your Director

R. A. VOGELEY
American Lutheran Church

SINCE you are reading this column in October, we hope you will make American Lutheran Church Loyalty Sunday a day long to be remembered. We hope your Sunday-school rooms have been crowded all fall, but that the walls will bulge out on November 20. More members of your church will begin to realize the great opportunities you have as a teaching church. They will see your needs for room, equipment, facilities, and teachers in order to be a teaching church, meeting adequately the opportunities in this day.

Rally to Loyalty

We hope that you have been using our Rally Day to Loyalty Sunday chart with the "Talks" prepared for our superintendents. We hope that the lines on your chart will merge in an amazing record which fulfills the high goals of our Emphasis Year.

We hope that in your church every family has Family Worship, that every Christian studies God's Word, and that every Christian spreads God's Word.

This really summarizes the purpose of the Parish Education Em-

phasis in the American Lutheran Church this year. But do not stop with Loyalty Sunday. That should be only the beginning for greater things to come.

Summary

We hope you will prepare a summary report of your entire work in Christian Education this year. Let your congregation know about the Sunday-school, including the Nursery Roll and the plans for helping the parents, the Nursery Class, and, if you have started one, the Home Department. Talk about the new classes you have started, the new pupils you have enrolled, the additional teachers you need.

Do not forget a report on your Vacation School and your Weekday School.

In the new Church year plan to strengthen the work you have been doing. Use the "Standards."

Continue the "Ten Topics," "A Teaching Church," to study your own work and to arouse greater interest on the part of more people in your congregation.

Look forward to the many things you can plan to make Christmas more meaningful this year to more people.

Continue to *Spread the Mighty Word.*

The Children's Christmas Service

ELSIE MUELLER
Waverly, Iowa

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee.
Zechariah 9. 9.

AS we prepare to celebrate the anniversary of the coming of our King, we might well ask with the hymn writer, Paul Gerhardt, "O how shall I receive Thee, How greet Thee, Lord, aright?" As the world makes more and more use of Christmas for commercial purposes, and young and old see Christmas approached from numerous angles, it becomes the more our responsibility to stress two main functions of the children's Christmas service.

The first is to tell the story of the Nativity and to tell this story in such a way as to make it meaningful to those who have a part in

the telling and to those who have come to hear. This presupposes that the entire program will be built on Biblical fact, and that every recitation or carol used will make a definite contribution to the whole. Each child should be led to understand how his particular part fits into the telling of the whole story and how this story fits into the complete picture of God's plan of salvation.

Worship

The second purpose of the service is to worship Christ our King. The angel who announced the birth of Jesus declared, "For there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." The angel designates the Babe of Bethlehem as the "Saviour" and the "Christ" which tells us plainly that He is the long-promised Messiah who should come into the world, and the title "Lord" indicates one who has supreme authority.

Magnifying Him

We can not put all the emphasis of Christmas on the Babe in the manger. While we gather around the Christ child and rejoice in the gift of His love, we would also join the angels in magnifying and adoring Him as our Lord and King, and would give ourselves anew into His service.

To the end that these two purposes may be accomplished, we must study thoroughly the content material of our program, and we must plan and prepare well.

The Christmas story found in Luke 2. 1-20 will be the subject of our program. It can be told in such units as: No Room in the Inn, The Holy Birth, The Shepherds in the Field, The Angel Message, The Shepherds at the Manger, and The Shepherds Glorify and Praise God. If desired the program may be expanded to include: The Promise, The Prophecies, Zacharias in the Temple, The Annunciation, The Wise Men Bringing Gifts, and such applications to our own lives as, We Bring Our Gifts, We Share the Message, We Worship the King.

Individuality

While the framework of the Christmas service is constructed entirely of materials from the Gospel story, it lends itself readily to a variety of treatment. Whether your service is one of song and recitation, or whether it contains pageant, drama, pantomime, tableau, or a combination of these, matters not a great deal if the primary purposes are kept in mind. Filling in

this framework with touches of individuality to suit one's need and taste is one of the chief joys of working out the program. The problem is to preserve the original charm and beauty of the Gospel story, and at the same time to awaken a new interest by providing a fresh feature.

Carols and meaningful recitations, which make definite contribution to the whole and fit into the proper sequence of the story, should be selected. Recitations which merely say something like, "I am not very big, but I can say, 'Merry Christmas,' " will not create an atmosphere of worship and will tend to make the program after the opening service deteriorate into an exhibition on the part of the children, and the congregation will become an audience instead of a group of worshipers.

It is our task to lead the children to feel that they have a share in spreading the "glad tidings of great joy" and to do it in such a way that the congregation will be impressed with the message rather than the messengers.

Careful Planning

Preparation for the Christmas service requires careful planning and much loving work. The committee and the director who are to be in charge should be appointed in early October. They should meet soon after their appointment to make the general plans. These plans will need to be studied and restudied by the director from every angle until he can visualize the Christmas service in its finished form and is thoroughly convinced that it will work in his church. One of the secrets of success is to have many people assisting with the preparations. There should be a competent accompanist, a person to work out lighting effects, several people to type parts and be responsible for programs, several others to coach those who will have speaking parts, ushers, and if pageantry is used, there should be a group that will take care of costumes and properties, and a number of other key people who will have definite responsibilities. All these helpers should be well-informed as to their duties and should be well-acquainted with the whole program. Their work should be guided and supervised by the director for in his hands is the full responsibility of the service.

Rehearsals Begin

Though much preliminary planning will have been done, parts will probably not be given out un-

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The Church School Celebrates Christmas

MR. AND MRS. MILTON JOHNSON
Messiah Church, Marquette, Michigan

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3. 16.

GOD gave to us the greatest gift of all, His Son, that through Him we might have eternal life. That is why we celebrate Christmas, because God loved us so much that He *gave* us His only Son.

But all of us, as parents and teachers, fall so short of passing on to our children that real meaning of Christmas. With the hustle and bustle of Christmas preparations in our homes, and the hectic hurry of our church-school preparations for a Christmas program, and also the concern that each child and each parent will be satisfied, we forget the joy of the story of Christmas. We forget that in receiving that Great Gift, our hearts should be so full of the love of God that nothing will stop us from telling that message to the whole world.

We become concerned with the Christmas program. What is important? Surely the reading of the Christmas story and the singing of our beloved carols. But very important, too, are the gifts that we as teachers, parents, and children give, and the spirit behind the gifts. Too often a nickel or a dime is placed in the envelope for the child, with never a sacrifice or never a thought as to the *why* of such a gift.

Where can the church school begin and what can it do to make everyone realize the real meaning of Christmas giving. Last year in our Sunday school, children and teachers voted to use the money, which for years had been spent on candy and gifts for the children themselves, to buy a bicycle or two for youth workers in Europe. There were a few parents who selfishly remarked, "My children give all year, the Sunday school could give to them once a year." But on the whole, everyone was delighted.

Starting Early

This is the first step in the right

direction. A real Christmas could come by starting early in our Christmas program preparation, and following through all the way with a plan of Christmas giving. Perhaps, the congregation would co-operate by starting the ball rolling with a Lutheran World Action Sunday, thus educating the parents.

Talk About It

Following Lutheran World Action Sunday, we could talk about it in Sunday school, and then talk some more about it, until each child becomes conscious of the desperate need of other children and families all over the world for food and clothing, and their desperate need for our prayers, for Bibles and Testaments, for youth and Sunday-school material.

Sundays Outlined

Each Sunday for perhaps five Sundays, during the opening service appropriate stories could be told. Perhaps the following suggested stories could be used:

First Sunday. The Christmas story, the story of God giving us His only Son.

Second Sunday. The Story of Abraham, willing to give his son, because of his faith and love for His God.

Third Sunday. The Story of Joseph giving to his brothers because of his love for them.

Fourth Sunday. The Story of the Widow's Mite, of the widow who loved her Lord so much that she gave all of her living.

Fifth Sunday. The Christmas Story, the story of God giving us His only Son, because He loved us so much.

After the story is told, a personal application could be made: "How could you show your love and gratitude? To whom would you like to give? Etc."

Publicity

The plan could be written up in the church paper, even in the local newspaper. It is thrilling to surmise just what an entire Sunday school could do, if each child and each adult would catch a vision of real giving. Just imagine what a tremendous force of good this could be, if this plan were adopted by all of our church schools.

Now to the actual Christmas program itself. There is a need to enliven our Christmas programs. Maybe this could be done in carrying our entire *giving* program to a thrilling climax.

At the beginning of this project, it could be decided upon by the teachers and pupils just what or where the gifts could be used: For

Lutheran World Action, for home missions, for foreign missions. You could decide on a definite field, such as Africa, China, India, or other foreign field.

Example

A skit, written by a worker in the church school could apply specifically to the goal of each school. The program could easily be written and applied definitely to each church school.

Here is an example:

Suppose your school decides to help Europe. Your skit, then, can portray Christmas Eve in a shattered home, with the father, mother and children celebrating Christmas. The father could be reading Luke 2 from a Bible or Testament which had been given to them by a pastor, deaconess, or other spiritual leader, who had received it from the local Sunday school.

After the reading of the Christmas story and the prayers of thanksgiving, a few carols could be sung. Then the conversation might drift to the gratitude of this family, who besides the Bible, had received much-needed food and clothing. The family tries to picture what the American Sunday-school boys and girls are like. In meditation about it, these children who have given so generously could appear in this family home and sing the joyous Christmas story in carols. Then a number of children, especially smaller children, could appear each with his envelope, in which is a sacrificial offering, and lay it on the hearth as he speaks his little piece about the Baby Jesus, and about God's gift to us.

Finally, when the message of Christmas has been told by all the church-school children, the European children realize that at last American children have found the real meaning of Christmas and they in turn catch the spirit of true giving. All this has happened because the love of Christ is there in the hearts of these children.

Conclusion

To end the skit, a curtain at the rear of the stage could be pulled back, showing a tableau of the manger scene with the Baby Jesus, with Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds bringing their gifts to the Christ child.

As the curtain is drawn all children on the stage join in singing:

Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy Kingly crown
When Thou camest to earth for me,
But in Bethlehem's home there was found no room
For Thy holy nativity.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus:
There is room in my heart for Thee.

Don't Say, "Don't!"

AMOS LUNDQUIST
Pastor, South St. Paul, Minn.

DON'T squirm around like that!" Don't be looking over to that other class!"

"Don't be bothering Ruthie all the time!"

"Don't—." "Don't—." "Don't —."

All too often we say, "Don't!" One little boy said to his teacher one day, "You always say to us, 'Don't do this!' and 'Don't do that!' but you never tell us what you want us to do." All too true!

We Protestants have gotten into a negative attitude of mind. Falsely we imagine that Christianity consists in a lot of denials, prohibitions, and refusals. Originally Protestantism meant a holding forth of the *positive* truth, but often it has become merely a *protest against* something we dislike. Just the other day some one said that Christianity consists only of a lot of "Thou shalt nots." The real essence of Christianity, however, is grace and life, growth and expansion, development and inspiration.

Be Positive

It is all too easy to sink into a negative Christianity. Sometimes we imagine that if a person refrains from doing only certain things he is a good Christian. But the same person, who may not care for certain popular habits, may be far more guilty in some other feature of spiritual living. Many so-called Christians are thrifty to a point of being greedy. Some are so good that they become censorious against others who have not had the same privileges as themselves. Again there may be jealousy, envy, or ingratitude toward the work of some of God's real servants.

Instead of being negative, let's be *positive,* in our teaching, in our attitude to our boys and girls, in our attitude toward all of life. The content of our teaching should encourage our boys and girls to emphasize the *positive* elements of Christian living.

Instead of telling our boys and girls, "Don't squirm around like that," or "Don't look off to that other class," let us tell them, "Let's try to sit still," or "Let's concentrate on what's going on in our own class." Or better yet, let us teachers be so enthused in our own at-

titude because of the inspiration of the lesson content that our boys and girls can not help but listen and likewise be inspired by the works of Christ and by what He is trying to do for all of us.

Jesus was positive. For instance, the Chinese have a sentence somewhat similar to our golden rule. But the Chinese sentence is negative: "*Don't* do to others what you do *not* want them to do to you." Nothing positive or constructive there. But how does Jesus put it? "Whatever you wish that men would *do* to you, *do* so to them" (RSV). Nothing negative about that. It is positive.

Words of Jesus

Notice also some other words of Jesus: "Go! wash in the pool of Siloam." "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." "Follow me." "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." "Take heart, my daughter; your faith has made you well" (RSV). Notice in this last verse that Jesus ignores any unbelief which may have been lurking in her heart, and gives her credit for the faith she had.

If we have a positive attitude in our teaching we will ignore many little annoyances going on in our class. Someone has said that when boys and girls begin to get drowsy and fail to pay attention, go and wake up the teacher.

Inspired Work

How can we become *positively* interested in our lessons, in our boys and girls, and in the mighty ongoing of the church of Christ on earth? Is there anything more inspiring than to watch Christ at work in human lives, young and old? Is anything more uplifting than to behold the Lord Jesus at work in His many institutions and missions all over the world? Is there anything more hopeful than to see Christ at work in our own otherwise weak, wayward, proud, hardened hearts and lives?

Preparation

First of all, we need to spend much more time in our lesson preparation. The very first part of the week we need to start reading over our lesson, and keep reading and reading it, over and over again, until something of the spirit of the man whom God used to write it fills our hearts as well. We need to read that lesson and parallel passages until it gets under our own skin and into our own hearts. What, for instance, would some great Sunday-school teacher do with this lesson? He would really make something out of it, and get something out of it, and send his

class members off to a week or a life of inspired service.

Then, also, we need to prepare ourselves. To prepare ourselves is just as important as to prepare our lesson. But how? Through much prayer, Bible study and Christian experience. Bible study for the sake of our own soul and life. Bible study so that we may really give our boys and girls the best available in the Word. And prayer, for our boys and girls by name.

The Word we teach is going to bear fruit in the lives of these boys and girls, we can be sure of that. If we could only see some of our boys and girls as at least some of them are going to be active in the church, twenty, thirty, forty years from now, it would give us joy, patience, and kindness as we work with them Sunday after Sunday.

How We Say It

Some of our boys and girls are going to be used of God for much more important work than what we are doing. The day may come when some of them will recall and tell of us as their Sunday-school teacher, who by some *positive* word, inspired them into a good, and noble, and vitally useful service under God.

In the preparation of ourselves for a *positive* teaching program we want to remember that it is not so much what we say in class that counts, although the content is important, as *how* we say it. *How* we say a thing reflects our own deep, unseen, spiritual attitude toward God and all His children.

Our boys and girls need, not a word of condemnation or judgment, but *love*. They need to become convinced that we are really concerned about their spiritual welfare, nurture, and development. *The best argument for the gospel is a Christian life.* Our boys and girls may not always understand what we are trying to tell them, but they can understand our attitude of Christian love, kindness, and patience with them. If we have this positive attitude in our teaching, we will often overlook and ignore a lot of petty disturbances going on in the class and maintain a positive glow that will inspire those who are hungry for the real Bread of Life.

Do not say, "Don't!" Say, "Do!"

SUPERINTENDENTS! TEACHERS!
Plan to attend the World Convention on Christian Education at Toronto, Canada, August 10-16, 1950.

Using the Assistant Superintendent

W. G. MONTGOMERY

THE one officer who could probably be the most useful in the church school is the one who is rarely ever used. We refer, of course, to the assistant superintendent.

Here is an officer who might perform many useful things by working with the superintendent and the teachers of the school. We wish we might impress upon our readers something of the importance of this position, and especially so since practically all schools elect an assistant, and then seem to think that all he has to do is to hang around and fill in when the scuperintendent is absent.

Give Him the Green Light

Nobody seems to know what else, if anything, the assistant could do. And yet he could easily become one of the busiest officers of the school, and one of the most useful, if only the way were opened for him to go ahead. We have never known any school to give him the green light or go-ahead sign, and because of this, we are pleading with church-school boards to look into this matter and supply a program for the assistant superintendent.

He could be instrumental in promoting the growth of the school, in creating the spirit of loyalty,

helping in special programs and financial problems, and so on, if a proper adjustment and understanding were established.

Suppose we think of some of the many things he might do in helping to build a better school, and things which may never be done unless he or someone else is designated especially to do them.

Now, in case your school or superintendent should like to try out these suggestions and thus widen the activities of the assistant, a meeting of the officers and others concerned should be called, first of all, to arrange for it. The assistant himself will be surprised to learn how useful he can be in carrying on the work of the school.

Important Duties

He will discover that taking hold of the school in the absence of the superintendent is his smallest duty, and yet the only thing he ever imagined he was supposed to do. Was he not told when elected that his duty was to open and close the school when the superintendent could not be present? But notice some of the other important things he could do.

First of all, the assistant superintendent should be the handy man or woman in the school organization. The first important duty is to get acquainted with the entire management.

Nothing important should ever escape the attention of the assistant. He should know about the teaching force and be able to teach when necessary. He might well attend all meetings of the teachers, know about the expenses of the school, and become the general technician behind programs, helping to devise methods and procedure in the work of the school.

He should be as familiar with the various activities of the school as the fireman of a locomotive is with the duties of the engineer. Sometimes something happens when the fireman must take over the duties of the engineer.

So, the assistant might well help plan the organization, help arrange for the classes, assist in securing teachers, and in a general way help engineer all the work of the school.

Of course, this does not mean that he is to take over the duties of anyone else, causing friction or jealousy. He is still only an assistant superintendent, and should never do anything except through the co-operation of the superintendent and the church-school board.

Superintendent Not Left Out

The superintendent will still have plenty of duties left, and we

are sure, would welcome the assistant in these other matters. And the assistant's field can be so big that he never needs to do the work of any other officer. The assistant's field is one which hitherto has been practically untouched by other workers in the school.

The assistant's field of activities can be plainly marked off, and the number of things so far neglected, which he might do, is almost unlimited.

Two Areas

In arranging the scope of his work, I suggest that it be divided into two general departments: that outside the school during the week, and inside the school on Sundays.

During the week he might bring about rich results for the school by cultivating the potential resources of the community, taking some time during the week to visit strangers, inviting them to school, visiting the sick and shut-ins as a representative of the school, looking up absentees as his time will permit and listing prospective students. Turning in names and giving important information to the proper teachers will do wonders in building up the school, provided, of course, that tact and good judgment are used in all such approaches.

He is not to organize nor do anything else that concerns the school as a whole, nor make any changes that are clearly the prerogative of the superintendent or the board. He is not supposed to be in a place of authority. All final decisions are left to those selected for that purpose. The assistant's suggestions, however, can be quite helpful in reaching these decisions.

Main Duty

His main duty, rather, is that of being a general scout for the school. He will find raw material, seek out new resources, and help widen the stream that flows toward the school.

Let him co-operate with the janitor in seeing that the building and classrooms are in proper condition as to heat and light. Let him see to it that each class has a place to meet which is clean and comfortable, and that necessary supplies are there.

For children's classes, let him see that the rooms are equipped with maps, charts, sand piles, or whatever else is needed. For adult classes, let him see that the proper quarterlies, journals and so on are available, and that tables, chairs and so on have been properly arranged by the janitor.

It is not that the assistant is to do all these things with his own hands, but rather to inspect the rooms, and co-operate with those who are supposed to keep the building and classrooms in order. His inside duties are enough to keep him busy every Sunday.

There will be strangers to meet, visitors to introduce, a teacher absent now and then whose place must be filled, announcements to make, all of which could be cared for by the assistant, thus relieving the superintendent so he may have time for other matters.

Recognition

We think it is only fair to the assistant that his position be recognized by the school as a place of honor and importance. We have known competent persons to refuse this position because they deemed it a place of no importance. We think his counsel should be welcomed at board meetings, and on all matters which have to do with the policies of the school.

By using the assistant as we are suggesting, you are giving him the best possible preparation to take over when the superintendent retires, and that, too, with none of the confusion and setbacks we have known to happen when a sudden change became necessary.

Let a word be said in conclusion as to the assistant himself. If possible, select a young or middle-aged person who is genuinely interested in the school and who can work with others; who has a pleasing personality, and a sense of humor, and is intelligent and fair minded. A big order? Yes, but please remember it is a big position to be filled.

Look Around

Even so, almost any school can find such a man by looking around. One other thing, too, is important. Before selecting the assistant see that he is willing to help in the manner outlined. And also be sure that the superintendent is agreeable to such an arrangement. And with such a set-up, we're sure your school will experience a new life and growth.

Why a new growth? Because the field of the assistant is rich in possibilities and fertile for the crop.

Next month THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER will feature its Quarterly Helps for Teaching the *Christian Growth Series.*

Planning for Christmas

PASTOR FRANCIS W. JOHNSON AND ESTHER CARLSON
Bethany Church, Laurens, Iowa

THOSE who have been privileged to work with children either at home, in the church, or in the public school know how important Christmas is to the average child. It ranks with his birthday on his own personal calendar of important days. Public-school officials have recognized this aspect of child behavior and use Christmas as a time for special programs, parties, and other functions of an educational and recreational nature. The business world also has been quick to capitalize upon it. Nearly every store has its toyland and its real live Santa Claus. Even in the so-called secular realm, Christmas is, indeed, a children's holiday.

Christmas for Children

But when we of the church pause to consider the true significance of this blessed season, we realize that it has even greater importance for the children of God. It is a special day for children in the church, too. The Christ who came to Bethlehem's stall came as a little babe. Later, when He had grown to manhood and went about teaching and preaching the kingdom of God, He said, "Suffer the children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19. 14,). Children have a very special place in God's kingdom and the church that is alive to its responsibility as leader of the young will provide a carefully planned schedule of Christmas activities in which children have a definite place.

The Secret

The secret of success in all such planning, of course, lies in starting early and giving diligent attention to the task at hand. The October meeting of the church-school staff is not too early for a discussion of general plans for Christmas. By the first part of November, those plans should be well formulated in order that the parts that tie in with the worship life of the congregation, and there should be such parts, can be cleared through the church council. For this purpose it would be well to have a committee from the church-school staff work with a committee from the council to clear dates and arrange a general sched-

ule of activities for the whole congregation.

Announce Plans

After all plans have been approved, adequate publicity should be given. Use the bulletin and the parish paper to accomplish this task. Congregations with access to space in local newspapers will find their "Church Notes" columns excellent places for publicizing their plans. Frequently your editor will run a special story on some outstanding event you are planning. Announce your plans and do it early. People like to know well in advance what the church is going to do during Christmas week so that they can arrange their own schedules accordingly.

Individual Planning

Since no two congregations are exactly alike, it is not possible to outline a set of plans guaranteed to work in every situation. It is possible, however, to suggest a few aspects of each church's normal program that should be given special attention in planning your Christmas observance. The traditional children's program, the Christmas Matins, or Midnight Service, whichever your congregation uses, and a sincere effort to bring the message of Christ to the community in which you live all offer splendid opportunities for effective planning.

Not Stereotyped

The children's program, traditional though it is, need not be stereotyped in any way. Use all the aids you can find in prepared programs, pageants, films, film strips and slides, but do not discourage any individual talent your school or your staff might possess. If possible, put originality into your program. It helps put the children at ease and holds the interest of adults.

Last summer at our Sunday-school program, all of which was written and arranged by the teachers themselves, the girl in charge of one of our beginner's groups worked out a splendid project. By way of illustrating the stories they studied, she had her group make posters depicting the various scenes. They also made a stage from a cardboard carton and fastened the posters together in such way that when the broomstick holders at each end of the box were turned the posters and figures moved across the stage. As they did so, the children took turns telling what each scene represented. The Christmas Story could be told effectively in a similar manner and the children

would enjoy preparing the scenes in advance as well as telling what each one means.

Do Not Stifle Talent

Original skits, pageants and plays, based upon the central theme of Christmas and checked carefully by pastor and superintendent, lend welcome variety to older groups. If suitable, they can even be passed on to the church at large for publication and general use. Do not stifle any talent you might have. Use it!

It would be well also to have a robed choir on hand for your program to guard against the all too prevalent attitude that this is an informal program rather than a worship service. Smaller congregations will find it necessary to use the regular choir, no doubt, but there should also be a children's choir. Not only does this add to the atmosphere of worship, it also helps to train future choir members. Ushers, too, should be drawn from the young people of the congregation.

The children's choir and the ushers can be used again at the regular Christmas service. And in your plans, you might arrange to invite the children as special guests at this service. You might even ask your pastor to prepare a special "Junior" sermon for the children. It need not be long and could precede the regular sermon for the day. We do this every Sunday in our church. Whatever you choose to do, make the children feel that there is a place for them in worship, too.

Home Missions

Christmas is an excellent time also to provide opportunity for a practical demonstration of home mission activity. Many church schools use it as a time to go caroling at the homes of sick and shut-in members of the congregation and the community. Some visit local hospitals and other institutions with the gospel of Christ the King. Still others make it a practice to prepare gifts for those who are in special need in one place or another. If you start early enough, the preparation of gifts to be sent to Lutheran World Relief would be an excellent service project.

Another potential project that has been largely overlooked has to do with community decoration for the Christmas season. Nearly every town has some kind of special festive dress. Every merchant decorates his store windows. Every home has some kind of holiday dress. Why not try to secure space

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What Are We Trying to Do?

ARTHUR H. GETZ
Editor, The Parish and Church School Board
United Lutheran Church

IT was at the conclusion of a Sunday-school convention that a superintendent sighed: "If our teachers would only set the right example for our children! They teach the Third Commandment, 'Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy,' and then go home after Sunday school instead of staying for the church service."

"I know what you mean," said his friend. "In our congregation we also have teachers whose lives do not square with their teachings. They are not hypocrites. They mean well enough. But their teaching suffers because they teach by words rather than through their lives. But perhaps they see as many personality weaknesses in me as I see in them."

"The difficulty in our church," said a third member of the group, "is that we who are teachers and officers do not know our stuff. I do not merely mean that we do not know the Bible well enough. We also do not know our church history, and we do not know enough about the practical functioning of our congregation and the Church at large. We do not even know how to make the proper approach to those whom we are to teach. I sometimes think we are a sorry lot at our church. Honestly if public-school teachers were as inefficient as we workers at our church school I would not want my children to go to school. And yet we all know that our job of teaching in the church school is at least as important as that of our teachers in the public school."

Little Preachers

"Yes," added a fourth companion, "and have you ever given serious thought to the lack of teaching skill that most of us reveal as we carry on our work? Most of us think we are 'little preachers,' and we carefully prepare our sermonettes each week and deliver them on Sunday. We still believe that teaching consists of pouring knowledge into our pupils. We do very little to develop the leadership skills that might result in true Christian growth on the part of members of our groups."

Thus these Christian workers

went on berating themselves. They summed up their discussion by saying almost in unison, "If we only had a better leadership for the work of our congregation!" But it never occurred to them that such an improved leadership is quite within the range of possibility.

There Is a Way

Of course, it will do little good for us to wish fervently for an improved leadership if we do nothing to bring our wishes to fruition. It will not even help very much for us to pray for an improved leadership if after our prayers we fold our hands in our laps and do nothing. Dr. Martin Luther had the right formula for success when he urged that we pray as though everything depended upon our prayers, and our own efforts were entirely of no avail, and that after such prayer we work as though all depended upon our work.

There is a way to secure an improved leadership for the work of the church in all our congregations. That way is by making full use of the leadership education courses that are being developed co-operatively by the American Lutheran Church, the Augustana Lutheran Church, and the United Lutheran Church. This leadership education series is built on two levels: First Series, or more elementary courses, identified by the letter *a* following the number of each course, and Second Series, or more advanced courses, identified by the letter *b* following the number of each course. First Series courses require only five sessions of fifty minutes each, and an equal amount of time for out-of-class preparation. Second Series courses require a minimum of ten fifty-minute class sessions, and a minimum of 500 minutes out-of-class preparation.

What Are the Goals

This new leadership education program has four goals:

1. *The development of consecrated Christian personality on the part of workers.* Probably every course in the series makes a contribution toward the attainment of this goal, but there are courses whose main purpose is the development of a Christlike character. For example, "Personal Religious Living," motivates the worker for constant effort to attain Christian growth and provides practical suggestions how such growth may be attained. Throughout this course the teachings and example of Jesus are studied as a pattern for present-day Christian living. The textbook for this course is *"Christian Growth Unto the Fullness of Christ."*

2. *Growth in a Knowledge of All Those Things Which Are Essential to Effective Christian Service.* The things which church workers need to know are numberless—a knowledge of God's Word, a knowledge and appreciation of the Christian church and its work, a knowledge and understanding of those who come under our leadership care, a knowledge of good leadership procedures, etc. Because the things which church workers need to know are so numerous a great many courses are being developed to help attain this second goal, growth in knowledge. Only a few of the courses can be mentioned here, such as, "A Brief Survey of the Old Testament," "A Brief Survey of the New Testament," "The Program of My Church," "How to Understand Our Pupils," "My Christian Beliefs," and "The Church Through the Centuries."

3. *Growth in Skill.* Almost every course in the leadership series makes a contribution toward the worker's growth in skill, for the new leadership series is eminently practical. But there are courses whose *primary* purpose is to help workers grow in the ability to discharge God-given tasks, such as "How to Teach in the Church School," and "Christian Evangelism," which gives guidance for carrying on a program of educational evangelism as well as visitation evangelism.

4. The final goal of the new leadership program is to lead workers to make use of their developed Christian personalities, their increased knowledge, and their growth in skill by engaging in consecrated service in the church.

Instructors

The goals of the leadership program have been set, and the textbooks to implement these goals are beginning to come from the press. In the coming months an ever larger number of very practical and truly helpful courses will be available. But this leadership program will not work itself. It needs consecrated and skillful teachers, both laymen and pastors, who will teach these courses. And it needs earnest Christian men and women, the workers in our churches who are already giving splendid service and are eager to improve their service for the kingdom of God, to pursue these courses. An improved leadership will be ours if we will pray as though everything depended solely upon our prayers, and if then we will work as though everything depended solely upon our work.

The Monthly Conference of Teachers and Workers

ELLA M. OSTEN
The Board of Parish Education, American Lutheran Church

Theme: The Christmas Season in Our Church.

Aim: To make the Christmas season a happy, joyous season for all.
To plan our services that they may be happy experiences, enriching and satisfying to young and old.
To make our observance a truly Christian one.

Suggested Scripture Readings:
Isaiah 40. 3-5. Isaiah 9. 6-7.

Suggested Hymns:
O How Shall I Receive Thee?
Prepare the Way, O Zion.

Before the Meeting: Ask the teachers and workers to read the articles in this issue on planning the Christmas programs. Be prepared to discuss the various points brought out in these articles. Check with your committees that they may be ready with their reports.

At the Meeting: Begin with a brief devotional period based on the suggested hymns and readings. Discuss the purpose of the Christmas program as given in the article. Consider your plans in the light of this discussion.

Make plans for the worship services in the church school during the Advent season, that this may be a season of preparation leading to the Christmas services being planned. Discuss the possibility of sending letters to the homes inviting parents' co-operation and giving suggestions for family worship during this season. Suggestions such as having an Advent wreath or candle in the home, or lighting the Gospel candle each evening when a part of the Christmas story is read, may be given. The family may learn sections of the Christmas story together in preparation for the children's programs.

Complete your plans for the Christmas program and services.

Are you planning to give your school an opportunity to express their joy and thankfulness by bringing a gift for some work of the Church?

Is there to be a distribution of gifts? Are you planning this so that it will not mar or disturb the beauty of your service?

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Youth and Stewardship

(Continued from October)

PASTOR THORSTEN A. GUSTAFSON

Helps

THERE are several helpful pamphlets. A recent leaflet entitled "Last or First," is a good one that can be put in the hands of young people. The tithe is one of those things that folks can talk about and talk around. In the Old Testament there were several tithes. Someone says that Old Testament giving according to the tithing system would run between thirty and forty percent of income. Some say that we are operating under an entirely different setup.

However, in the New Testament it seems that our Lord was willing to abide by the rules which prevailed in many sections in the Old Testament. He came to fulfill, not to destroy. And He did make a statement that there are certain things which ought to be done but not to leave the other things undone. And the apostles likewise mentioned freewill giving. The Lutheran Church has emphasized proportionate voluntary giving both from the point of view of the Saviour's words and of the teaching of the entire New Testament.

Paul and Stewardship

A more careful reading of 1 Corinthians 16. 1-3, that passage upon which we have based so much of our giving, may reveal a particular emphasis upon special offerings in the church. Paul was concerned about some poor people down in Jerusalem and he used even that occasion to enunciate some sound stewardship principles. However, we must admit that we have gone away from the basic idea of ten cents on the dollar as a minimum for the Lord's work even though the government might say when tax time comes that we can report up to fifteen percent of our income for religion and philanthropy.

A Floor

The tithe is all right providing we look at it as a floor and not a ceiling, as a good starting point, the other ninety percent being consecrated just as well to the work of the Lord in whatever area we might be using it. We save a lot of grief in talking to young people and older people if we look upon it as the floor and not a ceiling. As a general guide, the following facts

about tithing will prove helpful:

1. Christian tithing grows out of love for God and gratitude for all His blessings.

2. It is giving as God prospers us.

3. A Christian tithes, not for special favors from God, but because he believes it is a reasonable first step in giving for the Lord's work.

4. The tithe is ten percent of a Christian's income given for the work of the Lord. To what extent this shall include secular charities, or whether it is a tenth of net or gross income, or whether taken before or after taxes or medical expenses, the conscience of the individual must decide. God will show the way!

What Can We Do?

The question that confronts workers and teachers of children and youth is, "What can we do in the whole sphere of Christian stewardship?" In the first place, *we can begin with God* in our whole program of stewardship evangelism. Whatever we might discuss in the realm of Christian stewardship somehow or other comes down to the basic fact that there must be a foundation upon which we build, a response to the evangelical message which is given. And that response is this thing we call *stewardship, from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs, as each one is willing.*

Consecrate Dollars

It has been said since Sunday-school days, "We can not teach what we do not know. We can not lead where we will not go." Knowledge of the principles inherent in stewardship is essential to any person working in the kingdom of God. It is an eternal subject. Perhaps a good deal of the world's ills can be blamed on the fact that we have refused because of self to see the implications of what our dollars can do if they are put to work in the Christlike spirit.

Witness, for instance, the appeals that come to us, for missionary advance, Lutheran World Action, Student Service, the care of children, and the folks who have reached retirement age, etc., this in addition to a lot of the ongoing program of the Christian church. We are face to face with that. If the people of our churches will see more and more the good which can be done by those dollars when consecrated, of course, we shall then be approaching a better day when it comes to the whole program of the church.

Set Examples

Example is another thing. *We can set an example in our giving.* We do not have to parade that example before other people, they will soon catch on. And the folks who are among our best givers in the congregation, both when it comes to time and to treasure never sport that fact out among their fellow men. People notice it all the way along.

Furthermore and finally, *we can teach the deeper meaning of Christian stewardship.* Another word should be said about printed helps which are available for work in the local congregation. Some churches are making adequate use of the materials, others are not. There is a great deal of good printed material available through the stewardship departments of the Lutheran Church and the United Stewardship Council. The right use of this material will yield good results in the local program.

Audio-Visual

More frequent use of audio-visual materials is essential to effective stewardship promotion. There are several good sound films that can be used in each local church. Many have seen the film, "And Now I See." The film on stewardship and evangelism entitled "Salt of the Earth" is also available for use in our churches. The Protestant Film Commission's films, "Beyond Our Own" and "My Name Is Han," are also films which can be used in this whole field of stewardship. In addition there are a number of filmstrips, slides and recordings which can be ordered through the established agencies of your church.

From a Pure Heart

There are many experiments which can be conducted in training Christian stewards in our congregations. Wherever it comes within the purview of the teaching function, there should be close co-operation in the vital field of stewardship training between the workers within the church and the pastor and the Board of Administration. The one-talent, five-talent or ten-talent member should and can become truly useful and blessed in the exercise of his Christian stewardship.

The aim of our instruction must be love that springs from a pure heart and from a good conscience and from a sincere faith.

Happy are the children, youth, parents and leaders who have learned the meaning of the little line, "What I gave I have."

Activities in the Field of Christian Education

I. O. NOTHSTEIN

A Pleasant Interlude. A press report states that Mr. Fred W. Ramsey, executive vice-president of World Church Service, New York, thinks nothing of traveling 1,000 miles each weekend to serve as a Sunday-school superintendent.

Every Friday night Ramsey closes his desk in New York and boards a plane for Cleveland. On Sunday, he takes over his duties as superintendent of the church school in Calvary Evangelical United Brethren Church, a job he has held for the past thirty-seven years. Asked whether he did not consider this weekly trip as quite a chore, Mr. Ramsey said that his work in the church offers "a pleasant interlude in the week's occupation."

* * *

More in Sunday School. With everybody added, the Sunday-school enrollment in the United Lutheran Church has passed the 800,000 mark, the highest in ten years.

Pupils in Sunday school number 624,235, teachers number 73,420. Infants in the cradle roll number 90,930. They are counted because they, too, receive lesson material for home teaching. The department for aged and other shut-ins has 18,551 enrolled.

* * *

Anticipations. Taking his figures from the ratio of increase in the number of births and baptisms in the American Lutheran Church since 1938, the Rev. Raymond A. Vogeley, director of parish education, comments: "In 1951 we must anticipate a minimum increase of 21 percent in our Beginners' Departments even if no more Beginners' classes are started or no stronger program of evangelism is carried on. By 1953, due to the increased birth rate alone, the enrollment in our Primary Departments should be 45,960, or 36 percent higher than now."

* * *

Released Time Winning. Released-time religious instruction has suffered none of the anticipated setbacks by the Supreme Court ruling in the Champaign case, according to Dr. Erwin L. Shaver, Chicago, director of weekday religious

education for the International Council of Religious Education.

Speaking on the "Legal Aspects of Released-Time Classes" before a clergy and laymen's group in New York City, Dr. Shaver said that rulings on the Supreme Court's decision by the states had offered "encouraging grounds to believe that the principle of released time can never be invalidated."

Of the fifteen states acting on released time, he said, fourteen had pronounced the practice legal within well-defined limits.

* * *

Freethinkers Withdraw Petition. The organization known as "The Freethinkers of America" has withdrawn its action before the Court of Appeals in New York State to have the court pass on the constitutionality of the released-time plan of religious education in that state.

Meanwhile, it seems that there are Christians who themselves do not know what attitude they should take on this vital matter. In Rhode Island the Council of Churches joined the National Council of Jewish Women in opposing a measure before the General Assembly which would permit released-time programs at the discretion of local school boards. If we want a nation with Christian principles we dare not make the teaching of such principles illegal.

* * *

Excerpts from the Minutes of the Lutheran Intersynodical Committee on Parish Education, held in Columbus, Ohio, February 3 and 4. The Intersynodical Committee on Parish Education met in Divinity Hall, Capital University. The following were present: O. E. Feucht, A. L. Miller, and A. C. Mueller (Missouri Synod); Paul M. Lindberg, Lael H. Westberg (Augustana); Arthur H. Getz, S. White Rhyne, Harner Middleswarth (ULCA); J. C. K. Preus, T. C. Thorson, Mrs. A. O. Storvick (ELC); Cornelius Hansen (UELC); R. A. Vogeley, C. E. Linder, Miss Clara Kemler, J. A. Dell (ALC).

Devotions were conducted by the Rev. Westberg. Dr. Fendt, dean of the seminary, welcomed the group to Capital University.

A round-robin presentation on interesting items of work carried on during the year by the various boards proved very helpful. The meeting continued by a presentation by Pastor Vogeley, Dr. Linder, and Miss Kemler on "The Purpose, Content, and Method of Christian Education."

The next item to be discussed

was "Leadership Education." The Board viewpoint was presented by Dr. Getz and the Field viewpoint by Pastor Westberg.

The Rev. T. C. Thorson conducted the opening devotions the second morning, after which Pastor Vogeley reported on the Lutheran workshop on Audio-Visual Aids. The interested groups were encouraged to proceed with the project, and report developments and results to the Intersynodical Committee. (See article in this issue, *Summer Opportunities for Teachers.*)

Dr. S. White Rhyne reported on the plans for a combined promotion of the Parish Education Program in 1950. The possibility of using the same slogan and development of Parish Education Month had been assigned to the executive secretaries for study. The report was accepted and the interested groups encouraged to proceed with their plans.

Dr. Paul M. Lindberg gave a report on behalf of the committee on "Instruction Book for Church Membership." The committee was asked to continue a study of procedures and materials for adult instruction.

Dr. S. White Rhyne and the Rev. R. A. Vogeley were re-elected president and secretary, respectively.

Honestly, It Really Happened

The teacher had come to that part of the Sunday-school lesson where the printed questions brought the lesson to its conclusion. He proceeded to question the pupils. Down the line went the questions, beginning at the left. Of course, he asked the questions as printed, same order, same wording.

Finally, the teacher came to the last pupil and, somewhat puzzled, said, "Guess I can't ask you any question, son. There are no more in the book."

GERTRUDE HILL

The Monthly Conference of Teachers and Workers

From page 23

The committee on decorations might plan to put up some decorations for the Advent season in the classrooms and the church. This should be discussed with all persons concerned, such as the pastor, the church council, and others.

Determine that all will work together, each one encouraging and helping the other to make this season a truly blessed one for all.

World Convention at Toronto

Two kinds of delegates will enroll for the mid-century World Convention on Christian Education to be held in Toronto, Canada, August 10-16, 1950: those who will attend and those who will be able to share the proceedings only from afar. Receipts from all fees will be used to help defray the costs of the convention program and, particularly, for assisting in meeting the travel costs of citizens of distant and impoverished countries. The fees of any who now enroll as fellowship delegates and later desire to attend will be applied on attendance registration fees.

Each Fellowship Delegate will receive a brief pictorial report of the convention. One may enroll as many friends as desired by sending names and addresses, and one dollar for each.

Any church or group from which 25 or more individuals enroll *together* as Fellowship Delegates will receive a film strip of convention pictures, including photographs of delegates from distant lands and thrilling episodes of this significant mid-century congress.

Anyone desiring to share in the convention, either by attending or by becoming a Fellowship Delegate, may do so by filling in this enrollment blank and by mailing it to World Council of Christian Education, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, New York.

(PLEASE CHECK)

_____Please enroll me as a Fellowship Delegate for the 1950 World Convention on Christian Education, for which I enclose $1.00. (For additional enrollments use separate sheets.) I understand that if later I desire to register as an Attending Delegate, I will receive credit for the Fellowship Delegate fee sent herewith.

_____Please send me, soon after January 1, 1950, the folder containing further information about the program of the Convention and accommodations in Toronto.

NAME _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS _____
(IN FULL)

_____

DENOMINATION _____
(COMPLETE NAME)

Toys for Juvenile Guests

By RUTH PECK McLEOD

National Kindergarten Association

MOTHER, I don't want to go over to Mrs. David's house. She keeps saying, 'Don't touch that, dear,' whenever I just look at anything," protested litle Johnnie. "I like to call on Mrs. Sams. She has a whole boxful of toys that she *wants* me to play with."

"But I'm obliged to see Mrs. David," was the answer. "However, suppose you choose a toy of your own to take with you."

It is unfortunate that there are not more women like the motherly Mrs. Sams, women who provide toys for their juvenile guests. If we analyze the situation, we find that Mrs. David has had no experience with children. Tiny tots make her nervous. She considers every child destructive. She fears they will break her bric-a-brac. It has never occurred to her that the natural disposition to investigate will necessarily urge any child to handle her priceless antiques unless she provides proper playthings for him. Probably no one has pointed out to her that a few suitable toys would mean peace of mind for her and for the mother. For, as it is, mothers who call with little ones are usually too anxious about their children's behavior to carry on a connected conversation. To expect a child just to look at all the interesting things in a room and not to touch even one of them is unreasonable, and, too, the hostess and the guest mother are prety likely to develop into "don't" personalities.

In direct contrast to Mrs. David is Mrs. Sams, who has grown children. She realizes that a youngster should not be expected to remain motionless and quiet while the hostess and the visiting mother carry on a conversation uninteresting to the child. She, too, has a few antiques here and there, but the children who come to her house are content with the toys that have been provided for them.

Mrs. Sams explained to a friend that some time after her children had all left home she had given their toys to the Salvation Army at Christmas. Later, when she had a child guest one day, all she could contrive for the toddler to play with was an empty baking-powder can with a clothespin in it for a rattle. Before the next child came to her house, Mrs. Sams had bought some toys.

This thoughtful hostess happens

to live in a sooty city, where carpets are none too clean in winter, and so she has provided a large, old, discarded, India-print table cover which is kept clean and which she spreads over the rug where the child is to play. This cloth furnishes an attractive surface on which the child may safely sit, and it is very convenient, too, in case the little one is given a cracker or apple, and usually a juvenile guest expects a treat.

After all, we plan teas and other forms of entertainment for our adult guests, why should we not extend our hospitality to our younger visitors? A few toys, purchased for a small sum, will work wonders in giving pleasure to little boys and girls.

Planning for Christmas

From page 19

somewhere for a display by your church school calling attention to the true story of Christmas? But you need not stop there. Similar displays can be arranged in your parish hall or church basement, and parents can be enlisted in a plan to decorate their own homes and windows and yards so as to call attention to the real meaning of this important season. Here is a project that can put your whole congregation to work bringing the message of Christ to every passer-by.

Opportunities for an effective observance of Christmas in and through the church school are abundant, but they require careful planning, and planning that is begun well in advance of the Christmas season.

Children's Christmas

From page 6

til the first week in Advent. Because of the numerous activities with which children are occupied outside of school hours, most of the work will need to be done with small groups. If this is done intensively, one complete rehearsal for the whole group will be sufficient.

We can not over-emphasize the need of thoughtful planning and careful attention to detail, for only such preparation will assure us of a service in which there will be no hurried movements, no halting between scenes, no need for announcing parts to break the continuity of the presentation, but a service so smoothly and reverently executed that all present may sense the development of the story and enter into the true spirit of Christmas worship.